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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Letter dated 7 May 1991 from the Permanent Representatives of Colombia and Luxembourg to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text, in French and English, of the final communiqué of the First Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting between the European Community and the Rio Group, held in Luxembourg on 26 and 27 April 1991.

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 25 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Jean FEYDER
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Luxembourg
to the United Nations

(Signed) Dr. Fernando CEPEDA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Colombia
to the United Nations

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* A/46/50.

ANNEX

Conclusions of the First Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting between the European Community and the Rio Group held in Luxembourg on 26 and 27 April 1991

1. The First Institutionalized Ministerial Meeting between the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Community and its member States and of the Rio Group countries was held in Luxembourg on 26 and 27 April 1991, in accordance with the provisions of the Rome Declaration of 20 December 1990.

2. The following participated in the conference:

On behalf of the European Community:

Luxembourg	Mr. Jacques F. Poos Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Netherlands	Mr. Hans Van Den Broek Minister for Foreign Affairs
Portugal	Mr. João de Deus Pinheiro Minister for Foreign Affairs
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Belgium	Mr. Paul de Keersmaeker State Secretary, European Affairs
Denmark	Mr. Henrik Woehlik State Secretary, Foreign Affairs
Germany	Mrs. Ursula Seiler-Albring Minister of State, Foreign Affairs
Spain	Mr. Francisco Fernandez-Ordonez Minister for Foreign Affairs
France	Ms. Edwige Avice Minister Attached to the Ministre d'Etat, Minister for Foreign Affairs
Greece	Mr. Georges Papastamkos State Secretary, Foreign Affairs
Ireland	Mr. Gerard Collins, T.D. Minister for Foreign Affairs
Italy	Mr. Gianni de Michelis Minister for Foreign Affairs

Commission	Mr. Abel Matutes Member of the Commission

On behalf of the Rio Group:

Argentina	Mr. Guido José Mario di Tella Minister for External Relations
Bolivia	Mr. Carlos Iturralde Ballivian Minister for External Relations and Ecclesiastical Affairs
Brazil	Dr. Francisco Rezek Minister of State, External Relations
Chile	Mr. Enrique Silva Minister for Foreign Affairs
Colombia	Mr. Luís Fernando Jaramillo Correa Minister for External Relations and Vice-President of the Republic
Ecuador	Mr. Diego Córdovez Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mexico	Mr. Fernando Solana Morales Minister for Foreign Affairs
Paraguay	Dr. Alexis Frutos-Vaesken Minister for External Relations
Peru	Dr. Carlos Torres y Torres Lara President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for External Relations
Uruguay	Mr. Hector Gros Espiell Minister for Foreign Affairs
Venezuela	Mr. Armando Duran Minister for Foreign Affairs

Representing the Central American countries:

Costa Rica	Mr. Bernd Niehaus Minister for Foreign Affairs

Representing the CARICOM countries:

Jamaica	Senator the Hon. David Coore, Q.C. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica

3. The Ministers discussed political and economic issues. They welcomed the excellent relations between the European Community and its member States and the Rio Group in the political, economic and cultural fields, based on the close friendship linking the peoples of the two regions.

They agreed that it was in their mutual interest to strengthen further their solidarity in all areas.

In that spirit they welcomed the success of the Rome Ministerial Conference and the Rome Declaration of 20 December 1990, which institutionalized the dialogue and opened a new stage in relations between the two regions.

They welcomed the presence in the Rio Group of the two representatives of the countries of Central America and CARICOM and their participation for the first time in the political dialogue between the two regional groupings.

They took the opportunity of noting that the economic relations and cooperative relationship between the Community and its member States, on the one hand, and the Central American or Caribbean countries, on the other hand, were a matter for different institutional frameworks.

4. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

They welcomed in particular the constructive role that the United Nations was playing in resolving a number of regional or international conflicts.

They expressed their support for the strengthening of the United Nations in the discharging of its responsibilities, particularly as regards maintaining international peace and security, economic cooperation and humanitarian assistance. They emphasized the need to uphold and observe in full the rules and principles of international law.

They decided to intensify their consultations within the United Nations on matters of common interest.

5. The Ministers stressed the importance of regional integration processes for economic and social development and affirmed that they promote peace, democracy and closer ties between peoples.

The Ministers welcomed the new dynamism in the integration processes in Latin America. They considered that the strengthening of such processes was an important factor in bringing about a qualitative change in the links between the Community countries and those of the Rio Group.

The Community Ministers resolved to support integration efforts in Latin America.

The Community Ministers briefed the Ministers of the Rio Group on the proceedings of the intergovernmental conferences on political union and economic and monetary union.

6. The Ministers supported the peace initiatives undertaken in Central America and welcomed the constructive contribution of the United Nations Secretary-General and of the Organization of American States.

They emphasized the specific nature of the political and economic dialogue between the European Community and the Central American States within the framework of the San José Conferences, expressing their conviction that this dialogue had contributed to the peace process in Central America and to development in that region.

They also drew attention to the contribution of the Rio Group, in particular the three cooperating countries, to the promotion of peace and economic development in that region.

7. The Ministers welcomed the role of CARICOM in the regional integration and economic development of the countries of the Caribbean.

They expressed their support for the development of an economic community in that region.

The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the Lomé Convention between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

8. In the spirit of the overall objectives identified in the Rome Declaration, the Ministers emphasized their resolve to work for observance of the rule of law and for the strengthening of democratic institutions in their countries. In that connection the Ministers took note of the Seville Declaration signed at the tenth Interparliamentary Conference between the European Parliament and the Latin American Parliament.

In this regard, they expressed their conviction that democracy implied independence of and a balance between constitutional powers and also political pluralism, and must furthermore have as its objective the full achievement of social justice.

Reiterating the principle of the primacy of the democratically elected political authority, they welcomed recent progress in democracy.

They also reaffirmed their resolve to work together to create adequate conditions for economic and social development, thereby helping to eliminate poverty.

9. The Ministers stressed the link between democracy, human rights and sustained development. They also noted that democracy and respect for human rights were key factors in strengthening international cooperation and confidence among States.

The Ministers declared their resolve to combat any form of discrimination, whether on grounds of race, sex, culture or creed. They stressed the primary need for the protection of ethnic minorities, whose integration must be ensured while respecting their identity, and of refugees, women and children, in particular among the most disadvantaged sectors of the population.

10. The Ministers discussed the Gulf crisis. In this connection they emphasized the important role played by the United Nations in restoring international peace, security and legality. They reaffirmed their support for all relevant Security Council resolutions and emphasized in particular the need for full and unconditional implementation of resolution 687 (1991), as adopted by the Security Council. They also reiterated their belief that a peaceful settlement must be found for all conflicts in the region, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Ministers drew attention to the worrying refugee situation in the world and to that of the Kurdish and Shiite refugees in particular. They insisted on the importance of swift application in full of Security Council resolution 688 (1991) with the appropriate participation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and continued international aid for these refugees.

11. The Ministers reiterated the importance they attached to arms reduction and to the non-proliferation of weapons and instruments of mass destruction.

The Ministers accordingly noted with interest the initiative by Argentina and Brazil to set up a joint system of accounting and verification, applicable to all nuclear installations in both countries, and to negotiate an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

They expressed their support for the work of the Disarmament Conference, especially with regard to the total prohibition of chemical weapons at the earliest opportunity.

Both sides appealed to all States to refrain from exporting arms to areas where they could exacerbate a conflict.

The Ministers stated their resolve to reduce their military budgets as far as possible and to inform the United Nations annually of their defence budgets, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

12. The Ministers declared that they believed any acts of terrorism or terrorist threats to be totally unacceptable, regardless of the objective in view or the grounds for pursuing it.

They emphasized their resolve to devote particular attention to the prevention of terrorist acts.

13. The Ministers drew attention to the historic and cultural links between the two regions. They believed that the events that are to take place in 1992 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of these links should be characterised by

mutual understanding and respect and by the desire to strengthen further the bonds of friendship between Europe and Latin America.

14. Aware of the importance of information and the media, the Ministers expressed their wish to see a greater flow of information on each of the two regions in the media of the other, with full respect for freedom of the press and information.

15. The Ministers discussed the world economic situation, which gave them cause for concern. They agreed to cooperate in seeking solutions involving, in particular, the introduction of measures to promote reciprocal trade, economic cooperation and regional development. In this connection, the Community Ministers confirmed their intention of supporting the Latin American countries in their efforts for economic and social development, regional integration and fuller participation in the international economy.

16. The Ministers gave special attention to the debt problem. They acknowledged that the problem was an obstacle to political, economic and social development and to stability and consolidation of democracy in the Latin American countries.

The external pressure resulting from the high level of indebtedness of some Latin American countries, the burden of debt servicing and the links between debt, trade, development and investment could be increased for some countries by the recent international economic situation.

The Ministers recognized that the implementation of adjustment and economic liberalization policies created improved conditions for international cooperation on resolving the problem of indebtedness, the nature of which was such that it could not be resolved without greater cooperation between debtors and creditors in a spirit of joint responsibility. They pointed out that it was in the mutual interest of debtors and creditors to find a solution to this problem. They resolved to pay the requisite attention to the significant burden that external debt placed on the political, economic and social development of the countries of Latin America. To that end the Ministers recognized the need for resolute action in the appropriate forums, the Paris Club included, in order to make progress towards alleviating the debt burden.

17. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the resumption of the Uruguay Round negotiations and confirmed the importance that they attached to the successful conclusion of the negotiations as soon as possible. The Community Ministers saw the progress made by the Rio Group countries in opening up their economies as a positive factor in moving towards a satisfactory conclusion of the multilateral negotiations. Both sides expressed their determination to contribute as extensively as possible to the success of the negotiations and called upon all participants in the Round to act with flexibility and resolve in order to achieve substantial and balanced results.

18. The Ministers reaffirmed their conviction that the Generalized System of Preferences could make a useful contribution to more balanced international trade arrangements. They considered that better use of the advantages offered by the Community GSP could give added impetus to trade between both regions. They also noted that the Community had undertaken to review the system with a view to making it simpler, more transparent and more predictable.

The Ministers of the Rio Group countries thought it desirable to organize meetings with the Commission of the European Communities to foster exchanges of ideas in order to define the factors and measures that might help improve and expand the opportunities for those countries' exports to the Community market arising from implementation of the system.

19. The Community Ministers expressed their conviction that the completion of the single European market should bolster trade with third countries and, therefore, also open up new opportunities for exports from the Rio Group countries. While welcoming the recent progress in the Latin American regional integration process, the Community Ministers emphasized that the establishment of subregional integration zones should help step up reciprocal trade.

The Ministers of the Rio Group countries expressed their concern at the repercussions that the establishment of the single European market could have on exports from the region and expressed their interest in maintaining a steady flow of information and continuing talks on the likely effects of setting up the market in question.

20. The Ministers acknowledged that the existing cooperation between the two regions should be extended and stepped up even further in all fields.

In this connection, they noted with satisfaction the recent approval of the new general guidelines for Community cooperation with the countries of Latin America and welcomed the Community's decision to increase substantially the funding for this cooperation over the next five years.

The new guidelines meant that cooperation with the countries of Latin America could now be set in a multi-annual context as part of a more intensive dialogue covering both development aid for the poorest countries and sectors of the population and increased economic cooperation with the most advanced countries.

21. Recognizing the mutual benefit of cooperating in the area of investment, the Ministers again confirmed the importance they attached to increasing the flow of capital and productive investment to Latin America in order to revitalize the economies of the countries in question, stimulate trade and strengthen relations between industrialists in the two regions.

The Ministers accordingly confirmed the importance of improving the investment climate in the Latin American countries, as stated in the Rome Declaration.

22. In view of the economic stabilization policy being implemented by the Government of Peru, the Rio Group Ministers urged the member States of the European Community to support the early setting up of an international support group for Peru, as an essential and urgent step towards normalizing its financial relations.

The Community Ministers expressed sympathy for Peru in its difficult economic situation and their support for Peru's efforts to normalize its relations with the international financial institutions.

23. Priority areas of cooperation identified in the Rome Declaration

The Ministers considered the progress made since the Rome meeting in specifying the cooperation projects and initiatives between the European Community and the countries of the Rio Group that were signatories of the Rome Declaration, as mentioned therein.

(a) Cooperation in finance and investment

The Rio Group Ministers noted that, in accordance with the recent conclusion of the EEC Council of Ministers, the Community and its member States would shortly be holding a comprehensive debate on the external role of the European Investment Bank, and, in particular, on the possible extension of its activities on the various third countries and regions with which the Community had concluded cooperation agreements. The Ministers noted with interest that, in the meantime, without prejudging the conclusions to be drawn from the comprehensive debate, the Bank had been asked to examine, on a case-by-case basis, how it could contribute towards projects of common interest in those countries and regions already referred to which satisfied the Bank's criteria for action.

In this connection the Rio Group Ministers expressed their Governments' interest in submitting projects to the European Investment Bank and considered that opening up the Bank in this way, besides being a major step towards obtaining additional resources for the region, would have a favourable effect on the international capital market by giving rise to a better investment climate and greater utilization of the Community's financial mechanisms.

In addition, the Community and its member States declared their willingness to examine possible ways of collaborating on projects with regional financial institutions, in particular the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Ministers also noted the interest of the Rio Group countries in the European Community Investment Partners instrument, currently at the experimental stage, designed to encourage the setting up of joint undertakings in Latin America and to increase European investment in the region.

(b) Scientific and technological cooperation

The Ministers recorded that scientific and technological cooperation between the Community and the countries of the Rio Group was in their mutual interest.

Having noted that a debate on the topic was being prepared within the community bodies, the Rio Group Ministers expressed the hope that this debate would result in the participation of the Latin American countries in certain specific programmes under the third framework programme.

The Community Ministers stated their readiness to consider the participation of third countries, including member countries of the Rio Group, in specific community research programmes under agreements negotiated in accordance with the relevant Community procedures.

The Community Ministers recalled the Council's conclusions regarding guidelines for cooperation with Latin American and Asian developing countries and confirmed the Community's interest in strengthening the scientific and technological potential of the Latin American countries.

In this context, they confirmed their intention to continue and step up high-level scientific collaboration in activities under international scientific cooperation, for which the Ministers of the Rio Group hoped for significant budget increases to make possible an overall increase in activities and the financing of regional joint research projects.

The Community Ministers noted that the programme on life sciences and technologies for developing countries would be implemented in the near future; this would help to step up joint research in the area of agriculture and medicine.

The Rio Group Ministers also indicated their interest in Community support for an extension within Latin America of the TIPS Programme (Technological International Pilot System), which covers the exchange of technological and commercial information.

(c) Education and training of administrators and managers

Recognizing the mutual interest in increasing trade between the two regions and in accordance with contemporary economic requirements, the Ministers agreed to set up a human resources training programme in the Rio Group countries for administrators and managers.

With a view to making better use of human resources in the Rio Group countries, the Ministers agreed to implement a specific training programme and noted that the Commission of the European Communities had already begun the necessary work on implementing a work programme in close conjunction with the appropriate institutions and organizations of the two regions.

This work, which would be coordinated with the representatives of the Rio Group and the member States, would be based, in particular, on the following criteria:

- The modernization of administrative and industrial structures;

- Special attention to be given to the importance of regional and subregional integration;

- Priority to be given to the training of instructors;

- Use, where possible, of the infrastructure of existing institutions, avoiding duplication with national and multilateral activities in this area;

- Identification of measures to encourage the member countries of the Rio Group to join in European experiments in establishing closer relations between universities, the manufacturing sector and public administration.

(d) Cooperation in the process of regional and subregional integration

The Community Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the efforts being made by the Rio Group countries to expand and strengthen different forms of regional and subregional cooperation. The Ministers accordingly welcomed the Declaration adopted by the Rio Group in Bogotá in relation to the strengthening and restructuring of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), the recent signing of the Asunción Treaty establishing the Southern Cone Common Market, the renewed dynamism of the Cartagena Agreement, the progress made by the Group of Three and the Tuxtla Gutierrez Agreements entered into between Mexico and the countries of Central America, and also welcomed the partial economic complementarity agreements adopted in the framework of the 1980 Montevideo Treaty, which bore clear testimony to Latin America's desire for integration and were important instruments in bringing together the strands of the processes involved.

The Community Ministers stated their readiness to assist the countries of the Rio Group with both the theoretical and practical aspects of integration at regional, subregional and bilateral levels. Such cooperation would be implemented at appropriate levels and by appropriate bodies. Accordingly, technical assistance would continue to be given to the Andean Group under the cooperation agreement signed in this subregional integration process and a similar effort would be made for the Southern Cone Common Market and for those countries or groups of countries which requested such assistance.

The Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the signing of the Inter-institutional Cooperation Agreement between the Commission of the European Communities and the General Secretariat of LAIA and anticipated the early development of a programme of work that included technical cooperation and an exchange of information between the two institutions.

The European Community expressed its willingness, in conjunction with the Latin American authorities concerned, to prepare a plan of specific action and in particular to implement a programme providing for the exchange of ideas and experience on problems of integration, taking account notably of practical aspects, and the importance of private sector participation.

24. Other areas of cooperation

(a) The environment

The Ministers again expressed their determination to protect the environment. They recognized that the future well-being of mankind would largely depend on its success in reconciling the protection and restoration of natural ecological balances with the needs of economic development.

They reiterated their determination to give priority to problems such as the deterioration of the ozone layer, global warming, cross-border flows of dangerous waste, acid rain and the protection of forests and marine ecosystems. They also expressed their concern with regard to the preservation of biological diversity, air pollution and reducing waste production.

They decided to hold consultations and cooperate closely on environmental protection and, specifically, to confer together as closely as possible before and during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992. In this context, the Rio Group Ministers pointed out that the Latin American countries had determined their position at the recent Mexico Conference, preparatory to that of Rio, and had adopted the Tlatelolco Platform, which constituted the basis for Latin America's action on this matter.

They welcomed the joint progress made by the Government of Brazil, the European Community and the World Bank in setting up a pilot project for Brazilian Amazonia, which would be the first step in a broader programme for the whole Amazonian region.

(b) Drugs

The Ministers stressed that controlling the drug scourge was one of the most serious challenges facing modern society.

They reaffirmed their determination to step up their cooperation in fighting the illicit production, distribution and consumption of drugs, and trafficking and trade in drugs, including trafficking in precursors and the laundering of drug money, in accordance with the 1988 Vienna Convention, and expressed support for the action taken by the producer countries to promote alternative development.

25. With a view to preparing their next meetings and keen to intensify even further their cooperation in the spirit of the Rome Declaration, the Ministers decided to institute consultations between experts from both regions on specific topics in the areas indentified in this document.

The topics for discussion and the detailed procedures for setting up these consultations, which would be held as far as possible on the occasion of international meetings, would be defined by common agreement.

26. The Ministers decided to meet in New York, in the margins of the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

They decided to meet in formal session within the framework of the institutionalized dialogue during the first semester of 1992 in Chile in accordance with the rule of alternation as established in the Rome Declaration.